

metres from the chestnut tree, there were some young (c. 6m high) trees of Smooth-leaved Elm *Ulmus carpinifolia* which, so far as we are aware, has not been recorded specifically as a larval foodplant for *S. w-album*. As no males or females were seen around these trees, we could not be certain whether they were being used but a further search, to a radius of approximately 100 metres revealed no further potential larval food source. *Strymonidia acaciae* was also found along a grassy track lined with *P. spinosa* at c. 750 metres above Corleto Monforte, some seven kilometres to the southeast. With its wide variety of habitats this large area could easily conceal other previously unrecorded species and visits either earlier or later in the year could very well be rewarding.— P. J. C. RUSSELL, Oakmeadow, Wessex Avenue, East Wittering West Sussex PO20 8NP.

***Volucella inanis* (L.) (Diptera: Syrphidae) in the West Midlands**

A single adult was trapped in a house in Selly Oak, Birmingham (O.S. grid reference SP 048831) on 14 June 2003, and appears to be a the most northerly example so far detected in Britain, with the majority of recent records centred around the south-east and south-west of England (Ball and Morris, 2000. *Provisional atlas of British hoverflies (Diptera, Syrphidae)*. Biological Records Centre). It is possible that this species may become established in Birmingham in future.— ALEX J. RAMSAY, Centre for Agri-Environmental Research, Department of Agriculture, University of Reading, Earley Gate, Reading RG6 6AR.

***Wahlgreniella nervata* (Gillette) ssp. *arbuti* Davidson (Hem:Aphidinae: Macrosiphini) in Norfolk**

During the second week of June 2004 my wife noticed that the leaves at the lower half of a three metres tall Strawberry tree *Arbutus unedo* in this garden were dull grey-green and drooping in contrast to those of the upper half of the tree which were yellow-green and upright. On examination I found a heavy aphid infestation in younger stages of development. I immediately applied a proprietary insecticide, which had a dramatic effect in reducing the attack.

I then consulted Clive Carter, a long-standing colleague and aphid specialist, who using my telephoned description narrowed the identification down to the genus *Wahlgreniella*, and then on receipt of adults confirmed *W. nervata* (Gillette) ssp. *arbuti* Davidson. He advised that the insect, although little recorded in the UK, was in no need of conservation so I prepared to spray again only to find so few adults and but two batches of nymphs, that I left them to their own devices and within a few weeks none were to be seen.

Clive Carter pursued the matter of UK records first with V. E. Eastop, who examined the aphid collection in the Natural History Museum, South Kensington and who found the only East Anglian occurrence to have been at "Lowestoft Suffolk

8.7.1974 coll. C.F"; other records came from near London, namely Hertfordshire, Bedfordshire, Surrey and Sussex. A further possible record came from Andrew Halstead at Royal Horticultural Society, Wisley, who unearthed an instance received on 10 May 1957 from a Surbiton (Surrey) garden on *Arbutus menziesii*; other records of aphids on *Arbutus* came in 1993, 1995 (3), 1998 and 2000 (3). A further record was that from Ruislip, Middlesex in 2000.

W. nervata arbuti belongs to a group of mainly host-alternating aphids, but some species, of which this is an example, has only one hostplant and which reproduces by parthenogenesis throughout the year without producing true sexual forms that would pair and lay eggs. There has been little sign of the insect since late June and the tree has freely regenerated growth from the attacked parts. No previous attack had been noticed in the life of this twenty-years old tree,

The nymphs are identifiable by swollen tubes with dark tips and the adults have dark bands across the abdomen (adapted from *Aphids on the World's Trees* by R. L. Blackman and V. F. Eastop CAB International, 1994). I found the adult's large wing etched venation to be attractive and dragonfly-like.

These Caston specimens are preserved in the Natural History Museum. I am grateful to Clive Carter for his advice and pursuit of records and to V.F. Eastop and A. Halstead for so kindly supplying them.— G. M. HAGGETT, Meadows End, Northacre, Caston, Norfolk NR17 1DG.

Last call for flea (Siphonaptera) specimens

The Biological Records Centre is planning to publish an enlarged second edition of the *Atlas of the Distribution of British Fleas*, originally published in 1974. For this to be as up-to-date as possible could readers send any specimens that they have for identification and recording. Providing they are accompanied by data any quantity, from singles to hundreds, all will be welcome, whether they come from cats, dogs, from bird nesting boxes to voles, rabbits, badgers, etc. Identifications will be given and the specimens incorporated in RSG's collection unless their return is required, in which case return postage would be appreciated. — R. S. (BOB) GEORGE, 54 Richmond Park Avenue, Bournemouth BH8 9DR.

***Tinagma balteolella* (Fischer von Roesl.) (Lep.: Douglassiidae) in the East Thames Corridor**

At around 11.00 hours on 17 May 2004, I netted two small and unfamiliar moths in flight over a few isolated plants of Viper's Bugloss *Echium vulgare* in weak sunshine at the site of the former Beckton Gas Works in East London (VC 18: South Essex). The insects, though somewhat metallic in appearance, were distinctive in having practically no markings whatsoever, save a small, pale tornal spot that was very obvious in the sunlight. Reference to Heath & Emmet (1985. *Moths and Butterflies of Great Britain and Ireland* volume 2. Harley Books) suggested that the moths might